

Awakening

by 11092889

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Summary: My own go at a Halo-Mass effect crossover. including a Female commander Shepard, Master chief, Cortana and a rather underused Spartan, Linda-058. I plan to go from about mid way though mass effect 2 up to the end of mass effect 3. So, Spoilers abound. dropping by, having a read and leaving a review would be much appreciated. Rating may change later on but no solid plans as of yet.

## 1. Contact

A/N: I'm writing this with the assumption that you (the reader) have at least some experience with both the Halo and mass effect Universes. If, at some point you find fault with something I've written, and I'm sure you will, please consult the wiki for whichever universe the problem lies within before PMing me about it. Most, if not all the time I check things religiously before hand but chances are I will miss things. That and sometimes I change things to suit my needs, such as peoples Heights and weight and whatnot when its unclear or contradictory. Either way, Constructive Criticism is much appreciated :)

Going through rewrite before update.

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><p><span><strong>November 19th, 2553, Research station Trevelyan<strong>

The cold grey walls seemed to watch her as Spartan 058- Linda steadily walked behind the research assistant assigned to guide her through the base, all ONI structures seemed to have this effect. Linda wasn't sure if it was the superstitions surrounding ONI that made their compounds feel this way or if the walls actually had cameras, probably both, either way she shut these thoughts down and

turned her focus back to why she was here in the first place.

Research station Trevelyan had been established near the access portal to the slip-space bubble "shield world 006" the same shield world Linda and her other Spartan comrades had been rescued from back in April.

It's purpose was to study, not only, the Forerunner shield world itself but also any forerunner tech the U.N.S.C found within a reasonable distance to the base.

Linda was here to receive a minor suit upgrade and an AI package that the other Spartans from the shield world had already received. Following the successful partnership of Spartan John "117" & the AI CTN "0452" 'Cortana', ONI section three had deemed it beneficial to outfit the remaining Spartan II's with their own personal AIs to assist with their combat specialisations

Linda's AI, she was told, was to act as her spotter and help within a reconnaissance and analysis capacity, though being a 'smart AI' he or she could theoretically help Linda in whichever capacity she so desired, as long as it didn't require physical action.

She wasn't exactly sure about this whole thing to be honest, it wasn't that she distrusted AIs, she simply didn't like the thought of another being inhabiting her armour. She was used to being alone, or working with small groups of other Spartans.

Linda cleared her mind of her musings and followed the assistant further into the base.

Two lefts, a right and a lift journey down four floors later and Linda was standing in a medical room, being briefed on the procedure by the surgeon.

He was a tall man, about 6ft 2'', he had greying hair and a well kept goatee with silver streaks. The doctor looked to have seen some form of action throughout the war, evidenced by the faint plasma scarring Linda could see on his neck leading below his collar.

"It'll be a very quick operation" He was saying with a pleasant 'patient smile' "Just a quick look at your neural interface and a few small tweaks and it'll all be over." Linda wasn't paying much attention, she was more interested in what this AI would be like, she was... unsure about the idea of having a complete unknown practically living within her suit, AI or not.

"... There will be a few enhancements as well, reaction time most prominent amongst them, the AI will be able to significantly improve the data transfer speed between your motor cortex and your Mjolnir processing unit..."

Would this AI constantly chatter in her ear? Or would it remain quiet and unobtrusive? Would it be a help or a hindrance? Would it prove to be a companion or an annoyance?

"Now then, shall we begin?" The surgeon looked towards her expectantly and she nodded, beginning the arduous task of removing her armour.

Linda was tall, like all Spartan IIs, 7ft flat whilst in her armour and 6ft 9'' out of it, heavy too. Linda was 381lbs of lithe muscle. Though most of the weight came from the density of her bones and muscle tissue rather than the mass. Overall she had the appearance of a six foot nine Olympic sprinter With cropped Blood red hair and bright green eyes.

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><p><span><strong>Date: unknown, location:unknown.<strong>

A blue glow filled the cryogenics room in what was left of the \_Forward unto Dawn. \_Emanating from a small holo-projector the glow occasionally pulsed brighter for a moment before dimming again, as an avatar of a foot tall woman sat crossed legged just above the projector. She appeared to be humming to herself as she shuffled a deck of holographic cards. Her Name was Cortana and she was Master chief petty officer, Spartan John-117's personal AI and close friend. She continued to shuffle the cards.

According to her internal clock she and the chief had been adrift in unknown space for 3 months, 12 days and 8 minutes.

Her digital hands continued to shuffle the cards

After the destruction of the Ark and the firing of the Halo Arrays the aft section of the \_Forward unto Dawn \_had been sheared off and left behind by the closing portal. Chief had climbed into a cryo-pod and Cortana had dropped a distress beacon before Trying to find a way to amuse herself for the foreseeable future. She was sorely tempted to crack open chief's pod if only for the sake of conversation.

Her shuffling picked up speed

But no, she knew that while John would probably not blame her for it, she should not wake him unless they were in some type of danger. Still, she wished for some form of mental stimulation... there were only so many ways she could challenge herself before she became bored, and a bored AI was an interesting sight to behold.

As the deformed ship continued to drift through space Cortana continued to shuffle the cards, each one showing a complex mathematical equation that she attempted to complete before the shuffled card was hidden from view... she had yet to miss one.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Trevelyan Research base<strong>

Linda shifted slightly, readjusting her weight before slipping her Mjolnir MK VI helmet over her head. The operation had been quick and painless, the longest part had actually been stripping down from her armour and then reattaching it. She turned towards the doctor and nodded.

"All good? Fantastic" He smiled "Now comes the fun part" He walked slowly towards a black metal box on a table just behind the operating bed. opening it, he reached in and pulled out a small green data chip and handed it to her.

"May I introduce you to DRU 0576-2 otherwise known as, Darius" He placed the chip in her hand "5th generation Smart AI" She ran her thumb across the chip once before reaching back and plugging it straight into the new slot at the back of her helmet. Instantly an icy feeling poured over her neural interface, she shivered imperceptibly at this new feeling. It was odd and very new but not all together unpleasant.

She felt her neural lace stir and then out of her helmet's internal speakers came a cultured, English accented voice. Soft but undeniably masculine.

"Oh, why hello there. My name is Darius, and you are?"

She wasn't expecting that, she had assumed that her AI would already know of her. Unless the AI was simply being polite?

"Petty officer second class, Spartan 058" Her southern Drawl becoming slightly more pronounced as she said officer.

"Delightful." He replied before he accessed her external speakers and addressed the surgeon "Everything is running smoothly doctor, the upgrades appear to be seamless."

The surgeon smiled once more before nodding and opening his mouth to speak.

"Wonderful, now Darius if you'd kindly point the petty officer towards the Armoury where she can reclaim her gear."

"Of course doctor" A Nav point appeared on her visor HUD "This way Spartan."

Linda raised her eyebrow and walked off towards to Nav point, exiting the operation theatre and climbing a set of stairs.

Turning another corner Linda cut her external speakers and decided to talk to her new companion. "Darius?"

"Yes m'lady?"

She drew her eyebrows together, as far back as she could remember she'd been called one of three things by Non Spartans; Recruit, Ma'am and Spartan. She had never been called a "m'lady" before. Pushing her thoughts away she continued the conversation.

"How can I best utilise your skill set?" The answer came a lot faster than she expected, almost instantaneously.

"By simply leaving me be, continue on as you normally would and I shall feed you tactical data and suggestions throughout, I can also act as your spotter and hacker when required, I can mark targets and interface with your HUD giving you real-time updates on; target movement, local wind speed, wind direction, humidity, and at extreme ranges the planetary spin and the gravitational pull on your projectiles. I can also predict target movement direction with 86.896% accuracy in organics and 97.559% accuracy in mechanical targets."

Linda considered this carefully. Most, if not all, of those things she could do herself... But it took valuable seconds to complete and every little helps in a combat situation. It would be nice to not have to worry about such things and simply be able to focus on lining up a perfect shot, plus the real-time HUD updates would be somewhat more practical.

"I can also utilise your suits recording software to be the proverbial 'eyes in the back of your head"

That was a comforting thought, less chance of being surprised from behind. With the Spartans superhuman abilities it was almost impossible for them to be caught unawares however, Linda had been known to focus entirely upon her reticule and neglect her surroundings from time to time, never so much as to actually be blind sided but there had been one or two close calls. Eyes in the back of her head would be much appreciated.

She made a soft noise of acknowledgement in the back of her throat and continued to follow the Nav markers through the base.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Date: unknown, Location: unknown<strong>

Cortana's hands continued to shuffle the cards at an increasingly faster rate.

Every now and then she would send off a runtime to check the Dawn's outer cameras, her only method of navigation as the command bridge was currently on the other side of the forerunner portal. Cortana had set up a basic process to notify her if anything large enough to be considered a moon came into view.

So far all had been quiet.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Research base Trevelyan, Armoury<strong>

Linda stepped through the sliding armoury door and headed straight towards her 'Black Bag'. A large duffel bag containing everything a soldier might need on tour.

Most soldiers bags contained; mission appropriate clothing, armour, sleepwear, sleeping bag, under garments, camelbak, wash cloth, towel, supplementary clothing items and accessories. Linda however had no need of such things. She pretty much lived in her Mjolnir Mk VI armour which had its own hydration system and, for long-range assignments, was stocked with 'meal pills' a relatively large green pill containing all the recommend nutrients and calories per day for a Spartan II commando. As such her black bag was filled with her own personal and customised weaponry, up-sized for Spartan use. Every Spartan II was fully versed in Human & Covenant weaponry and was able to put them to deadly use but the up-scaled versions were simply more comfortable. Plus they were in essence their only real belongings.

Within Linda's black bag was; a set of Spartan sized fatigues, her dress uniform, a M7S submachine gun, the standard issue weapon of the

Spartans a MA5C assault rifle jokingly dubbed 'Johns baby' and as much ammo as she could cram into the bag.

She smiled sadly at the thought of her lost friend, behind her visor, and shouldered the sack. picking up her SRS99C-S2 AM Sniper Rifle from its resting place beside the bag she addressed the new denizen of her suit.

"Where to now?"

"Now m'lady, I believe it's time for us to leave. Updating your HUD with a Nav marker to the Pelican pad now." He replied in his soft voice.

Linda nodded once "Thank you Darius."

"I am here to help" She could almost feel the smile in her neural lace.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Date: unknown, Location: unknown<strong>

Cortana's holographic hands were now moving at a breathtaking speed as she tried to keep herself occupied, the cards flashing past as the appeared and then disappeared back into the deck. The complex mathematical equations were flying through her digital 'mind' at a blistering pace. It still did not satisfy her. She needed a challenge, she needed to be tested... what she needed is a problem to fix.

Alas, whilst drifting in deep space with the chief in cryo sleep the probability of finding a challenge was stupidly low.

\* \* \*

><p><strong><span>Research base Trevelyan, mid levels by the R&D labs.<span> \*\*

Linda moved at a brisk pace through the complex. She was now two levels from the pelican pads and the pelican that would take her up to the waiting the Charon class light frigate, UNSC Euphrates. The ship which held the rest of the last surviving Spartan II commandos and the Spartan IIIIs. She contemplated the Spartan IIIIs as she walked.

Tom and Lucy seemed all right, though the trauma that Lucy had suffered left the Spartan III literally speechless. It was the other three that worried her slightly. Ash, Mark and Olivia. They weren't as... tested as the Spartan IIs, they weren't as steady under fire nor were they as durable. Their 'Augmentations' weren't really augmentations at all, merely a drug cocktail pumped through them to heighten their abilities. Unfortunately, while making the process much safer than the Spartan II program it turned out a significantly lower standard of soldier. Not to mention the fact that they were acting twitchy as all hell now that they weren't getting the counter-medication to 009762-00, the drug which enhanced their aggression levels to dangerous levels during combat situations. However, without the counter-medication the heightened aggression was showing itself while out of the field. Linda wasn't sure she wanted

people like that watching her back.

She was thrown from her thoughts as an alarm blared and warning lights flashed on all over the base. The facility shook and Linda grabbed a wall for support.

"Darius" She said, voice slightly raised. "What's happening?"

His answer was quick and smooth, even as he updated her HUD with another Nav point. "There appears to have been an accident in one of the R&D labs-

"This is a facility wide announcement, all staff are to evacuate immediately. Repeat..."

"recommend we evacuate immediately" Darius finished, flashing the Nav marker.

Linda took off at a Run.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Date: Unknown, Location: Unknown<strong>

Cortana's avatar threw the holographic cards away in disgust. She couldn't even pretend that they were entertaining her in the slightest. She was deliberately using her avatar to act out how she felt simply for something to do. There was no need for the holo-projector to even be active with John in cryo but it was a minute task that served to keep at least a few of her processes busy.

She began to run through ideas of what she could do.

She could have her avatar dance, or juggle, or... knit? None of which would serve the purpose of occupying her sufficiently. She had already indexed the entirety of her collected knowledge, sorting it first via importance and then by name and finally size.

Being the most advanced AI the UNSC had ever constructed was taxing at times.

Her mental search for new activities was interrupted when the process she had set up to watch the external cameras suddenly alerted her to a planet shifting into view.

She paused for a whole half second in shock before darting through the system to the external cameras. Her runtime designated to watch for planets was either more advanced than she'd given credit to... or stupider than she'd realised. The Dawn wasn't going past a planet, it was instead drifting into an asteroid field. This was not good, At all.

Time to wake the chief.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Omega nebula, Sahrabarik system, Normandy SR-2 en-route to Omega space station.<strong>

Commander Nikki Shepard stood just behind Joker's pilot seat as the \_Normandy \_completed its mass effect jump.

"Set a course to Omega Joker" Her voice was rich and pleasant "We have a Mercenary to pick up and then we need to do a little shopping for the engineers"

"Aye aye Commander"

She smiled and laid a hand on the pilots shoulder for a moment before walking back through the CIC. Spotting Garrus, she headed towards him.

"Suit up you old dinosaur, you're coming to Omega with me for a little shopping" She smirked slightly as his mandibles flared. Garrus was a good friend who'd been with her since the beginning of the whole Saren mess. She had taken Garrus under her wing, so to speak and had let him grow further without the over watch of C-sec. She'd guided him gently through the problems he'd had and in return he'd come to think of her as his best friend and even somewhat as a mentor. As such he'd become fiercely protective. It was very rare that he wasn't on the ground team with Shepard.

He nodded as he fell instep with her towards the lift.

"Shopping, Shepard?" He asked in his flanging voice.

"Mm hmm" She nodded slightly, stepping into the lift and pressing the button to her cabin. "We're picking up a merc as well. A 'Zaeed Massani'. Apparently he's a well known and well feared bounty hunter in the terminus systems. Cerberus has hired him to help us throughout the mission against the collectors."

"Money is a rather shaky loyalty base, Commander." Garrus warned, uneasily.

Shepard sighed quietly as the lift continued its slow journey upwards "I know Garrus but right now we need all the help we can get. I've gone over the dossiers that Miranda forwarded to me. So far, including me, we'll have a thirteen person team... Against an army." She pinched the bridge of her nose "And that's at very best, some people may not join up, or the dossiers may be out of date and they've moved... Hell some of them could be dead." Nikki ran one hand through her dirty blonde hair. The odds weren't exactly in her favour, but then, they never were usually.

The lift doors opened and Garrus placed his talons on her shoulder, squeezing softly in a show of support. "We'll do it Shepard, if anyone can pull this off it'll be you" She smiled slightly and stepped out of the lift.

"I'll meet you by the shuttle in five Garrus, I'm not expecting trouble but it's best to be prepared."

He nodded, mandibles flexing slightly, "Of course Commander" He pressed the button on the lift for the cargo bay and the doors slowly closed.

Shepard pressed her hand to the holographic lock on her quarters and walked in as the door opened. Stepping down the three steps from her

office area she walked to the left side of her bed and opened her armour locker.

Her hard suit came out on a sliding rail and she slipped off her fatigues and then pulled on her under armour. A skin-tight, flexible suit designed to keep the wearer cool and dry whilst working under high stress. Then came the fabric layer with kinetic padding and finally she attached the heavy grade ceramic chest plating along with the boots, gauntlets, shoulder pads and thigh plates. Three minutes later she was waiting as the lift carried her down to the cargo hold.

Omega was a shit hole. Plain and simple. Miranda had put it quite aptly when she said she felt like she needed a shower after leaving. Omega had a way of making someone feel dirty. And not just grimy on the outside. Something about the place got inside you, ingrained itself in you and made you feel unclean.

As Shepard stepped out of the lift and began to walk towards the waiting Kodiak shuttle, and Garrus whom had kindly collected her weaponry from her, Joker's voice cut through her radio.

"Uh, Commander? I think I've got something up here on the sensors"

Nikki pressed two fingers to the side of her helmet to show she was on the radio and hadn't just gone bat shit and decided to have a conversation with herself "What is it Joker?"

"I'm not sure Shepard, looks like a derelict ship but it's broadcasting a signal"

"What sort of signal?" she asked, stopping on her way to the shuttle.

"No idea commander, its not on any known frequency. EDI just picked up the ping"

She thought about it for a moment, this ship could be nothing, it could also be a trap. On the other hand, it could be a distress signal. Shepard made a quick decision.

"Bring us in closer Joker, I want to have a look"

There was a pause for a moment and then "Aye Commander" Shepard then switched to ship wide coms. "Miranda, Jacob. Suit up and meet Garrus and I by the Kodiak. We're investigating a derelict ship" Two affirmative beeps through the com system answered her.

\* \* \*

><p><span><em><strong>Forward unto Dawn <strong>\_\*\_\*Cryogenic bay\*\*

Cortana began the process of thawing out John. Slowing cutting the coolant flow to the pod and warming the gel bed. He'd be awake in a few moments. And covered in freezer burn. She kept telling him that entering the pod fully armoured was silly but in this case it was necessary. The ship was completely de-pressurised the only thing stopping what was left in the ship from floating away into the abyss

was the few still functioning doors on the aft vehicle bay and the secondary armoury.

She turned her attention to the pod as the Master Chief began to stir.

"Chief, can you hear me?"

The super-soldier stirred slightly, shifting around and swallowing the bronchial surfactant. He stretched his arms slightly, testing the extent of his freezer burn. Spartans didn't particularly care about freezer burn. It was a mild irritation at worst, unnoticeable at best.

"I hear you" His reply was short, but not harsh.

"Your pod's latch is malfunctioning chief, you'll need to pull the manual release" John nodded and reached above him, grabbed the handle of the release and pulled it down. Letting the pod door swing up, he climbed out and grabbed his MA5C. Rolling his shoulders he stepped up to the holo-projector.

"What's the situation Cortana?"

Her avatar placed her hands on her hips, "What? No 'hello'? No 'nice to see you'? No 'oh, you look nice today'?" She scowled slightly "Way to make a girl feel special chief. Honestly, you haven't seen me for three months-"

John was staring at her blankly behind his helmet, best to let her blow off some steam. This was the usual reaction when alone.

She hadn't really been the same since High Charity and John couldn't blame her. The things the Gravemind had done to try to coax information out of her had been... Terrible.

"-And another thing, you come marching out of cryo, after I wake you up mind you. And just demand" she affected a poor imitation of Johns gravely baritone "What's the situation Cortana' like I'm some sort of grade three technician who exists simply to-"

"I missed you too, Cortana."

Her avatar stopped pacing to and fro and turned to him "Really?"

He nodded.

She turned her head up and nodded once, very precisely and well controlled.

"Good"

"...So, the situation?" He asked again.

Her avatar's hand came up and a picture of the outside of the ship appeared.

"We're floating into an asteroid field Chief"

He stood up straight and looked at the projector.

"Recommendation?"

Her avatar looked at him for a moment "I recommend that you yank me and then get a move on to the nearest escape pod, Caveman"

Chief sighed quietly, she was going to be snarky for a while.

He began to reach for her chip when-

"Wait!" Cortana's avatar suddenly started to look about "A ship just came into view of the external cameras"

"Covenant?" He asked, checking the ammo counter on his MA5C.

"No, unknown craft, very small. I don't have any sensors or scanners, all I have is the external cameras and even some of those aren't working." She kept watch for a moment "Recommend you prepare for borders Chief, they appear to be sending a craft of some sort towards the aft vehicle bay"

"Yank me chief"

He pulled her chip from the holo-projector, slid it into his helmet port, felt the icy feeling encompass his neural lace and then took off towards the vehicle bay.

May as well roll out the welcome mat.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Aboard Kodiak shuttle en-route to unknown vessel<strong>

"What can you tell us about this ship EDI?" Shepard enquired of the AI, she already had the basics before leaving but wanted something more in-depth.

"The ship's profile is entirely unrecognised Shepard" The synthesised voice replied "It doesn't match any known ship classification... It also appears to have been sheared in two"

Shepard nodded to herself, she already knew this.

"There are very faint energy readings coming from the husk but the eezo core appears to be offline. The artificial gravity is offline, the husk is entirely de-pressurised and the engines are dead."

Shepard looked over her weapons as she listened. She carried an M-22 Eviscerator shotgun and an M6-Carnifex hand canon. Both of which were incredibly well cared for.

"The wreck was more than most likely designed for war as it has 2ft of titanium based alloy armouring attached to inertial dampeners fitted to the hull"

That shocked Nikki. 2Ft of Titanium would be tremendously heavy compared to the lightweight ablative armour on most alliance ships... and ridiculously hard to crack. The inertial dampeners would mitigate the kinetic energy to a level where the battle plate could soak up

the damage or even deflect it and the sheer thickness of the armour, not to mention titanium's natural strength and heat resistance, would mean that the Armour would be able to take a truly vicious beating.

That also raised the question of what on earth could cut the ship in two.

"Your landing zone will be some form of cargo bay, I am detecting no signs of life. ETA: 3...2...1. good luck Commander" Shepard stepped out of the shuttle doors, Carnifex raised and ready, Garrus just behind.

Nothing.

Just blackness and vacuum.

The magnetic clamps on her boots keeping her grounded, she walked forward slowly, Carnifex still raised. A moment later she called out.

"Clear" Garrus' own voice quickly followed, accompanied by Miranda's and Jacob's from the other side of the Kodiak.

"Regroup" Garrus stood behind her and to the right, Miranda and Jacob came around the Kodiak to face them.

"Right" shepard began "Two groups of two, we'll split up, scour the ship for salvage and then meet back here in thirty minutes, radio contact at all times."

"Aye Shepard" They all nodded. She nodded back and began to walk towards what looked to be a door in darkness "You're with me Garrus" She turned on her torch as she walked.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Research base Trevelyan<strong>

Linda shot up a set of stairs, taking them four at a time. She'd had to divert multiple times due to the facility taking damage, it seemed like the whole place was shaking itself apart. Her black bag rocked on her back and her sniper rifle was calmly gripped in her hands as Darius updated her Nav points at every turn.

He'd added readouts to her HUD such as; distance to destination, a map of the facility in the upper right hand corner which updated as Darius discovered blocked sections, the structural integrity of the station...which was dropping at an alarming rate and her own current speed.

Her Nav point updated as a section of ceiling fell into her path.

"Take a left M'lady, through the secondary labs, it will lead to another flight of stairs and from there it is only seven corridors to the exit and the pelican pads"

"Got it" She shot through the doors to her left and was suddenly engulfed in a white light.

"Darius!? What's going on?" She nearly shouted.

"I don't know, this is entirely unexpected. I recommend you move, Fast!" She agreed and darted through the light heading towards the door.

It pulsed brighter.

She was nearing the door, just a few more metres.

The light was blinding.

She could see the door controls, she reached for them.

The light pulsed once more, brighter than the last time.

"Its a forerunner artefact!" Darius shouted in Alarm "Get away from it!"

It let out a blinding pulse of white light and then Linda knew no more.

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><p><span><em><strong>Forward unto Dawn, <strong>\_\*Main access corridor to aft vehicle bay\*\*

John was secluded in a dark corner of the corridor. He'd pulled himself above the hallway and was now stood on a maintenance gangway, waiting for the boarding party. In order to leave the vehicle bay they'd have to use this corridor. They would have to walk directly beneath him.

That's when he'd strike.

He'd wait for them to go past and then quietly pick off the last one. He could probably lift the unknown up to the gangway and hide them. Assuming they weren't too heavy.

The door slide open, he could hear boots.

Time to get to work.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Unknown ship, cargo bay<strong>

Shepard walked forwards, taking point. Her Carnifex raised and eyes alert. Garrus was right behind her. She reached the door and put a hand to her helmet.

"Found a way out yet Miranda?"

"Nothing Commander, but we've found some odd things"

Shepard frowned behind her mask "Such as?"

"We've found wheeled vehicles Shepard, with English writing on them"

"what!? English? You're sure?" This was getting weird.

"I think I'd recognise my own language Shepard" Miranda said sarcastically. "But still, it makes no sense. Have you found a way out of the bay?"

Shepard made a soft noise of acknowledgement "Yeah we have, meet me here" She tapped her omni-tool and sent her location to Miranda.

"On our way Commander"

A few moments later and Miranda came around a crate, Jacob in tow.

Shepard motioned to the door. "Stack up, this looks like the only way out of the bay and this ship is making me twitch"

Jacob took the left, Garrus took the right.

Jacob would open the door, Garrus would shoot in followed by Shepard and then Jacob would dart through followed closely by Miranda forming a loose semi-circle around the doorway.

"Ready. 3...2...1 go!"

Jacob slapped the door release and Garrus shot through the opening, M-15 Vindicator raised and ready. Shepard charged through after, Carnifex up and steady. She was quickly followed by Jacob, Wielding his M-22 Eviscerator. Miranda came through last, M-4 Shuriken covering the squad.

The entry was over in moments.

"Clear" Came the unanimous calling of the group.

"Right" Shepard began "We're going to advance up this hallway and search the remains of the ship, if we find a fork we'll split but keep radio contact at all times and I want an update every ten minutes."

Garrus, Jacob and Miranda all gave some form of acknowledgement.

Shepard took point, Garrus behind her and Miranda in step with him. Jacob took up rear guard.

After a moment the Turian opened a private coms channel to Shepard "You okay Commander?"

"Yeah Big guy, I'm fine. But this ship... There's something about it that just doesn't sit well with me, I don't like it" She paused for a moment "It feels like I'm being watched, lets get what we can and get out"

"Mm, good idea Commander, this place is giving me the creeps" His mandibles chattered slightly in agitation.

The group continued to walk forwards down the corridor, eyes looking around, taking in the details of the ship. The walls were cold and

grey. There was no sense of decoration in their design, simply utility.

Shepard stopped suddenly, holding up her fist she started to look around, helmet mounted torch illuminating her field of vision.

She'd heard something just now, she knew it.

"Shepard?" Garrus enquired.

"Quiet, listen" She said, straining her senses "Something is in here with us"

The team began to look around, hoping to spot something in the dark.

Miranda had her Shuriken raised, barrel mounted torch piercing the darkness.

She swung it around and then screamed in shock.

A large green fist was illuminated for a split second before it shot forward, grasped the gorget of her Cerberus assault armour and slammed her against the wall.

Miranda knew no more.

Shepard whirled, eye's darting around, searching for whatever had taken Miranda. Her Shuriken was on the floor and Miranda was nowhere to be seen.

"Shit! Group up, watch each others backs" Shepard swore quietly to herself, she knew she'd heard something. Now everything was going to shit.

"Eyes up! That thing came from above, must have" She gripped her Carnifex tighter.

There was a dull clunk to her left and the group span around to face it.

She heard a muffled yell and the sound of flesh hitting metal.

Shepard span and let off a shot in the direction of the noise.

Whatever this thing was it now had Jacob as well.

"Bugger it!" She now stood back to back with Garrus. She didn't know what this thing was but it had really pissed her off.

They kept their weapons high, scanning the ceiling for threats.

Shepard whirled at the sound of footsteps. They were loud, heavy and very fast. Whoever was running at them was either a krogan... or wanted them to hear it.

Her breaths where becoming faster now, adrenaline was flooding her

veins, her eyes were dilated and her hands were gripping her Carnifex tightly. This thing was smart.

There was a ting of metal against metal further down the hall and both Shepard and Garrus turned to face it... only to be rewarded by an armoured green fist to the blue helmeted head, the blow was like lightning, one moment there was nothing and the next Garrus was on the floor, helmet dented and the fist was nowhere in sight.

Shepard fired into the dark.

Nothing.

She slowly backed up against the wall, Carnifex sweeping the area in front of her, helmet torch desperately trying to pierce the darkness surrounding her.

Nothing.

She pulled her team's vitals up on her HUD.

All alive. Unconscious, but alive

This thing was capturing them. And it was doing it with extreme skill.

Another ting.

She fired towards it.

Nothing.

It was playing with her.

She grit her teeth and continued to look around.

A flash!

She whirled. That's when it hit her. A solid blow to her stomach. She doubled over panting. A leg sweep. She fell to the floor. An unmovable weight over her torso. Pinned. The barrel of a gun against her visor.

"Don't move" The voice was calm, deep and gravely.

\* \* \*

><p>AN: so, tell me what you think? constructive criticism is always appreciated :)

## 2. Neutralised

A/N: I'd just like to thank everyone for the overwhelming response to this. I honestly didn't think people would bother with it. So, many thanks for all the reviews :)

Rewrite going on before update

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Unknown ship, 10 minutes after arrival.<strong>

Shepard stayed stock still and looked at the 'thing' that straddled her and had incapacitated her entire team.

'It' actually looked human, shape wise at least. It was abnormally tall, with broad shoulders. It was encased in olive green armour with a gold visored helmet that looked as if it could weather a full on hit from a tank. Oh, and it was currently pointing a gun at her face. That bit was important.

Whatever this thing was, human or not, she hadn't been so thoroughly trounced since she was a cadet. She was most definitely not pleased by this.

She shifted her hips uncomfortably beneath the behemoth. It was damn heavy as well. It brought so many questions to her head.

What was this thing? Where did it come from? Why didn't it kill her team mates? How big of a hit could that armour take? If she tried to escape would it try to capture her again or simply kill her? Could she take it in a straight up fight? How did it accomplish what it had? And most of all, how had it got their radio frequency in order to communicate with her?

"What are you?" She whispered in shock. The giant ignored her question completely. It tapped the barrel of it's gun against her visor.

"Who are you?" It's voice was undeniably masculine, a gravelly baritone. It was...fitting.

"My name is Nikki Shepard, Former Commander in the Alliance Navy and Council spectre"

Pretty much everyone in the known galaxy knew her name. Hero of Elysium, Saviour of the Citadel, First human spectre and various other accolades and titles.

As such it came as a bit of a shock when the thing replied "Who? And what?"

She gaped behind her helmet. Nikki wasn't fond of her fame but she recognised that it was there. What rock had this guy been living under? Or better yet, where had he come from?

"Nikki Shepard" She repeated "Council Spectre" She said it slower this time. It was possible that the giant was still 'buzzing' and hadn't caught her words.

"Council?"

Or not.

\* \* \*

><p><span><em><strong>Forward unto Dawn,<strong>\_\*\_\* main access corridor to aft vehicle bay\*\*

John kept the majority of his weight on his knees so as not to crush his captive. She was... odd. She had mentioned being a Naval Commander but when he'd asked Cortana to verify this it had turned out that there was no Naval Commander known as Nikki Shepard. Then she had gone on to say she was a council spectre. What this was, he didn't know. Never mind the fact that she said she was with the 'Alliance'.

He spoke inside his helmet. "Any ideas Cortana?" He felt his neural lace stir after a moment.

"A few. But they're half formed and rather indecent to look at right now. I'm more interested in getting out of here Chief... you know, before we're pounded into space dust by the asteroid belt that is getting progressively closer! Now stop with the 'me caveman, me smash' routine and get your green armoured arse into an escape pod." He could practically feel the huffiness coming from her in waves.

Maybe he should have paid attention to Johnson's sweet-talking?

Pushing such thoughts aside he turned his attention to the 'officer' between his thighs.

"Why are you here?"

"We caught a signal coming from your ship" She started. "I decided that it was worth a look"

He had to admit, he was impressed. Her voice was even and relatively calm. Not many people could stay calm talking to a Spartan at the best of times... let alone when their thousand pound form was straddling the person and pointing a gun in their face. Most non Spartans would have shat themselves in this position.

He was rather glad she hadn't.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Unknown Ship, cargo bay hallway<strong>

She looked up at the armoured giant above her. It had her pinned beneath it's significant weight and she wasn't entirely sure she'd be able to shift it.

She pushed against him with enough force to knock over Jacob.

Not even a twitch.

The behemoth pressed the gun against her faceplate with renewed purpose.

Definitely wouldn't be able to shift it.

She relaxed completely, trying to show as little resistance as possible. Getting shot was not on her list of things to do today.

"I wouldn't try that again" The giant growled.

"What do you want from me?" She asked, thinking of all the possibilities. He might just kill her, or maybe he'd toy with her first? Perhaps he would ransom her off to the Batarians? None of these things were a particularly enjoyable thought.

"Information" Short but to the point she supposed.

"On what?" She started to get up on her elbows, only to be pushed back flat.

Being manhandled was not fun.

"Where are we?" It growled.

"The Omega cluster, Sahrabarik system." The barrel of his strange gun was pressed to her visor directly over her left eye.

And it was a strange gun indeed. She hadn't really noticed before, but now she realised that it was an odd shape. It was large as well, larger than a Vindicator.

She couldn't really see much from the position she was in but there seemed to be a button along the side. Odd. She tried for a better look.

\* \* \*

><p><span><em><strong>Forward unto Dawn,<strong>\_\*\* main access corridor to aft vehicle bay\*\*

"Um, Chief?" Cortana's Voice was tentative and soft, holding none of the acerbity of earlier. "I think we're in trouble"

John felt the Woman shift and kindly 'reminded' her of his fully Automatic, Air cooled, gas operated Anti-son-of-a-bitch-machine by tapping it on her visor.

"How so?" He said, Switching off his outgoing radio connection to his captive.

"There's no such place as the Omega cluster" Her voice came through his interior helmet speakers. "Either this person is nuttier than squirrel shit...or we're in, well I don't know." She sounded rather upset at the idea of not knowing something. Hmm.

He turned his connection back on and growled out his reply to the basket case.

"Prove it" He wasn't sure if he hoped that he was somewhere completely unknown, or if the person beneath him was meant to be in an institution.

He hoped she was crazy.

She Raised her arm and he grabbed it, still pressing his MA5C against her face plate.

"Relax" She'd lowered her voice "You said you wanted proof, this is it"

He thought for a moment before returning his hand to the grip of his rifle.

She raised her arm again and a holographic interface appeared around her forearm like a gauntlet.

"Impressive" Murmured Cortana.

She began tapping into for a moment and then looked back towards his visor, confused.

"Um, how would I... that is to say, how can I. How would I go about sending you data?"

"Chief" Cortana Whispered "Yank me, wave me over the device and I'll transfer a data miner over"

He held the woman's forearm once more, though much gentler this time, and pulled Cortana's chip from his helmet. Waving it over the holographic device, he saw a small blue jump and then returned the chip to his helmet.

"What did you just do?" Her eyes portrayed the utmost confusion at the moment. He supposed, that to her, it must have looked like he had merely waved a blue rectangle over her arm.

"Transferred your star chart data of this system to my suit's computer" '\_and everything else on your device'\_ Though he left that unsaid.

"Chief" Cortana did not sound like she was about to share good news. Shit. "We're, well, we're buggered to put it bluntly"

Wonderful.

"How?"

He seemed to be saying that a lot lately. Despite the fact that he, and the rest of the Spartans, could do accurate slipspace calculations on the fly due to the addition Superconducting Fibrification of his Neural Dendrites during the augmentation procedure. In fact all Spartan IIs were incredibly intelligent and weren't the muscle bound automatons that the ODST's seemed to think they were.

Not only were the Spartan IIs made superhuman due to the augmentations they underwent, but the reason each individual candidate was picked for the Spartan project was because of their genes. Without the Spartan project, each of the conscripts would have grown up to be the best humanity had to offer anyway. Superior intelligence, speed, strength, endurance, reaction speed and physical stature.

These genes also helped with their augmentation process. If a normal person were to survive what the Spartan candidates went through, then the Augmentations would make them great, superhuman.

But the Spartans were the best.

At age six John had managed to break four fingers on a marine drill instructors hand and cause various small wounds with his teeth and nails before being beaten into submission by stun batons.

At age eight he led the Spartan candidates through a training exercise in one of Reach's many woodland valley's. The objective was to get to the Pelican for extraction, however, the last to arrive would be left behind. And the base was on the other side of a treacherous mountain range. When they arrived at a pelican they found it guarded by unknown, non-uniformed soldiers. Taking no chances, John came up with a plan to neutralise the guards, hijack the pelican and get everyone home. Beating down the marines with stones and causing severe injuries, he made sure he was last aboard the drop-ship and then, with the help of DÃ©jÃ (the 'dumb AI' responsible for the Spartans early academic training), piloted the craft back to base.

At age fourteen, after eight years of brutal training and education under MCPO Mendez and various Tutors and AI's, John had the body of an eighteen year old Olympic athlete.

He survived the Augmentation procedure and a legend was born.

The process had transformed him, from a near perfect specimen of Human achievement, to a superhuman warrior.

Due to the Carbide ceramic ossification his bones were now practically unbreakable.

A series of muscular enhancement injections had increased the density of his muscle tissue and reduced lactase recovery time, increasing his strength and reducing the need for rest after strenuous activity.

A catalytic thyroid implant boosted his muscle and skeletal growth, increasing his size and improving his strength once more, however it also reduced his sex drive to the point of near non-existence.

Occipital capillary reversal had increased blood flow beneath the rods and cones of his retinas had strengthened his eyesight to superhuman levels and given him almost perfect night vision.

Superconducting Fibrification of his Neural Dendrites had replaced his nervus system with superconducting fibres, increasing his reaction speed by 300% and giving a marked increase to his already impressive intelligence, memory and creativity.

Despite all this, John was not the fastest. That was Kelly.

He was not the biggest or strongest, that was Sam.

He was not the best shot, that was Linda.

He was not the best hand-to-hand combatant, that was Fred.

But, he was often considered the bravest. Many also thought him the luckiest.

John just figured he was doing his Job.

He pushed such thoughts away.

"Nothing makes sense Chief. Her device, called an omni-tool by the way, says that the year is 2185." Cortana's voice filtered in through the helmet "Stranger still, there are encyclopedic entries about Earth and different species galactic histories... Chief, none of it happened. It's like we've jumped into a completely different time line."

Wait, what? This was...This was really not good.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Unknown ship, pinned by a giant green thing<strong>

Shepard let out a soft grunt as the Armoured being suddenly stood.

This was her chance.

Shepard shot up and threw a full powered kick towards the armoured giant's midsection, only to have her shin caught in his iron grip. She stood there for a moment. She hadn't even seen his arm move. The next second she was seeing stars as his other fist shot forwards and punched the chin of her helmet.

Her head rocked back and she fell to the floor. collecting herself, she lunged forwards again. The behemoth caught her and threw her against the grey wall of the corridor.

She groaned in pain but persevered and swung a punch at his head.

The giant's arm darted out, blocked her punch and twisted her arm behind her back, pushing her up against the wall.

"Stop!" The gravelly voice said. She almost snorted. Shepard couldn't move if she wanted to, it seemed as if the giant's full weight was pressing her into the metal.

"I'm going to let you go, and we are going to talk" It growled. For the first time there seemed to be a hint of frustration creeping into its voice.

"Fine" She grunted. Being manhandled was definitely not fun.

He slowly released his hold on her and took a step back. She stared at him for a moment and briefly contemplated having another go at him. Bad idea.

The giant picked up his gun, must have been thrown to the side when she attacked him. She sighed. He obviously needed her for something otherwise he would have simply killed her.

The question was however, what did he need?

\* \* \*

><p><span><em><strong>Forward unto Dawn,<strong>\_\*\_\* main access corridor to aft vehicle bay\*\*

John went over his options in his head, Cortana appeared to be curled up in his neural lace, quietly going through the data that her program had collected from the holographic device she called an 'omni-tool'.

He was, as far as he could tell, beyond the known galactic rim.

He had stumbled upon an entirely new civilisation, possibly in a different timeline. this was FUBAR.

That was... not a lot to go on to be honest. He needed more information. He needed to know where he stood in this mess. He needed to know if he could get back to the UNSC.

But first, he needed to get off the \_Dawn.\_

He looked at the woman in front of him.

She had a ship.

Hmm.

He could just take the ship? Cortana could pilot it. It'd probably take years to get back to Earth via slipspace but it was better than nothing.

Of course that wouldn't reflect well on the UNSC if this was discovered.

He could try and secure passage on this ship of hers but... he hadn't made the best first impression, now had he?

Bugger.

He could pretend to be beaten by this woman and the stow away as they left?

Highly unlikely.

"John" Cortana started "It's... it's worse than I thought"

nothing ever works well, does it? There's always a problem with something, isn't there?

"How much worse?"

"As in, these people don't have slipspace, have banned AI's, are essentially bound by rules set out by an alien triumvirate and are dependent upon a rare element for all of their tech, worse"

Wonderful.

"Great" Came his sarcastic reply. This just keeps on getting better. Scratch that slipspace back to Earth idea. "Options?"

"Well chief, I'm not sure how to say this, so I'll just get it over with. You need to play nice with the natives"

Shit.

"How?" Ah, that word again.

"How should I know?" Came her indignant reply. "My best friend is a socially awkward death machine, you think I know how to win hearts and minds? I was built to crack open security protocols, keep your arse out of the fire and blow shit up" Yupp, still slightly frazzled about the wake up. Lovely.

John wasn't sure when she'd be over that, but hopefully it would be soon. She seemed to be staying angry for longer than usual.

He sighed quietly into his helmet. Oh hell, here goes nothing.

He opened the com line to the woman. "Commander Shepard?"

The woman looked towards him. "I am Master chief petty officer, Spartan-117 of the UNSC"

"UNSC?" Came her reply. No recognition of the acronym. Oh dear.

Hmm, bare minimum to make her think the idea was plausible. No use giving up information he didn't have to.

"My government."

"Right." She looked at him oddly. "And why are you telling me this?" Her body wasn't relaxing, in fact she seemed more wary now.

"Repeat after me Caveman, you're going to talk us into a war." Said Cortana. At least she was helping, that's a plus.

"In the hope that you will understand my reaction, and offer forgiveness" He could tell he'd be speaking a lot more in the next few minutes than he had in the last two years. Wonderful.

Shepard seemed to go from shocked to angry.

"Not likely big guy! I don't take kindly to people attacking my team and I!" Yeah, angry was a good word for Shepard right now.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Unknown Ship, cargo bay hallway<strong>

The nerve of this giant... thing!

It, or he, or whatever the hell it was that had just beaten her arse to the ground was now asking for forgiveness? I think not!

But.

If she could somehow convince it to help her? No, too dangerous. She didn't want this thing on her ship.

It was powerful though. It could help with the collectors?

No.

But maybe? Just maybe, if she could somehow force it to help her? In some way that it wouldn't be a danger to her ship and crew? Maybe. Unlikely, but maybe.

"I understand that I have... made a mistake, and I apologise. But where I come from, having armed and unknown personnel board your ship is terms for a forceful reaction"

It sounded uncomfortable, its voice also sounded like it was unused to holding such conversations. Interesting.

She contemplated it's words. Where was it from? Questions for another time, right now she needed to know if it was going to turn her into a paste any time soon.

"What is it that you want? Not five minutes ago, you were throwing me around this room, what changed? Why do you want to talk now?"

"I realised that I had made a mistake. I was trying to talk with you when I let you up from the ground but you attacked me and I retaliated."

Hmm, she highly doubted that he had expected her to simply stand up and let everything go.

His voice was getting a slight scratchy quality. Definitely not used to long conversations, did it have other ways to communicate? Or was it simply not big on talking?

This was going nowhere, she wanted to know what know what it wanted. Now.

"Yes, fine. That's all well and good but it doesn't explain why you didn't simply kill my team and I in your 'forceful reaction'. What do you want?"

She was beginning to become impatient.

"I want your help. I'm stranded here, over a hundred thousand light years from UNSC space. There is little, to no, chance of me being able to return"

Wow. Okay, that's... impressive. How in the nine hells did he get here!?

"Yes, I've gathered that you need help but I don't see how I'm supposed to help you!"

Impressive or not, she was still angry. And rightfully so! He was obviously being as vague as possible and that was not improving her mood.

The giant looked straight at her for a moment. It was a sight to behold. She estimated that he was just above seven feet tall, he was obviously incredibly strong and his reaction speed was obscenely fast. Add the green armour and that gold visor and, well, he looked

like some form of mythical Cyclops. With enough armour for a ship.

It sounded as if this person was a test pilot, if every one of his people were like this? Then, well, the council would have a very large problem on their hands when, or if, they encountered them.

"I would like transport from this Ship, in return I am willing to offer you any aid that I can while I search for a way home"

Too easy, no way would she get what she wanted that easily. Not to mention that he was still a danger.

"Oh really now?" she was incredulous. "You get a lift out of here and I get whatever assistance I want from you? For the indeterminable amount of time it would take for you to find a way home? Seems like a lopsided deal to be honest" she looked directly at his visored face plate. "What's your angle?"

"My angle, is that I would like to leave this ship before an asteroid hits it" Definitely becoming frustrated with her. But a fair point. "And at the moment I don't have many options, beggars do not have the luxury of being choosers."

He continued.

"Now, you can accept my offer of aid, get me off this ship and we can all leave. Or, we can argue moot points until the oxygen in our suits runs out, an asteroid blows us into space dust and the star goes supernova. Your choice"

Damn it.

"Fine" She growled. "But this conversation is not over! I will let you onto my ship but you will give me your word that you wont harm anyone! Time will tell if you are trustworthy, time you will spend out of everyone's way. You will aid me when I need it, as per our deal and in return I will help you. Understood?"

"Understood."

she nodded, right. Time to leave.

God, she hoped this wasn't a colossal mistake.

\* \* \*

><p><span><em><strong>Forward unto Dawn,<strong>\_\*\* main access corridor to aft vehicle bay\*\*

Commander Shepard was, without a doubt, an exceedingly stubborn woman.

"Right chief, that is probably the best deal we're going to get, and at this point we can't be fussy. I need time to work out a way back to the UNSC, hopefully you can buy me that time by helping this Shepard woman."

Nothing was ever simple was it?

"On the plus side, she should keep you busy. I went over her personal files from that thing on her wrist."

Interesting.

"Apparently she's a war hero, almost single handedly held off a major pirate raid on an important colony in the outer reaches of human space. She was part of some sort of special forces group for most of her military career, N7 or something."

Good.

"Basically she's an ODST without the drop pod" Hmm. "She became the first human spectre, before you ask, a spectre is a council operative, they answer to no one but the council and are authorised to use any means necessary to complete their mission."

John frowned behind his visor, surely that was a liability? No, he didn't like the sound of that, people needed order, they needed rules and guidelines to follow, without that they were just a rambling mess.

"Two years ago she reportedly killed a rogue spectre, Saren Arterius, stopped an invasion of AI's housed in synthetic platforms and saved the council. Then she just vanished. She was declared dead and a ceremony was held. Absolutely nothing from her at all, until about a week ago."

At least he had a background now to work with now. That was a start.

"So John, I recommend that you help this woman out with whatever it is she's doing whilst I trawl this civilisations data storage to find a way home."

He got the distinct feeling that if Cortana had a body she would have accentuated that last sentence by patting his head.

This was FUBAR.

"Fine." He still had questions though. "What is this 'council'?"

"The Council is the Alien triumvirate I mentioned earlier, it's comprised of the three most powerful species in this area of space. The Asari, the Turians and the Salarians."

"The Asari are a species of Mono-gendered, female looking, blue skinned aliens with a very close appearance to humans, the body shape is practically the same with the exception that instead of hair they have semi-flexible, cartilage based head ridges that can be shaped to an extent. They are naturally adept at, something these species call 'Biotics', the ability to manipulate 'mass effect' fields. You don't need the the science behind it, but basically they can change the mass of objects and control dark energy to lift, push, pull, shred molecules, create kinetic resistant barriers and reverse the effects of gravity. In short, when you see someone hostile start to glow blue, put them down. Hard."

Mm, John didn't like the sound of Biotics, hopefully a five round

burst and a new nasal cavity would put them down like everything else.

"Now Turians are pretty much under-powered Elites, similar body structure, similar focus on honour and combat but they aren't as strong, or as fast, or as tall. They have exceptional eyesight however, making them good shots. They are about as strong as a very fit human, and are about as tall. Same as Elites, you won't be able to break the via terror tactics, slaughtering their squad will lead to an organized fall back rather than an attempted energy sword shave however."

A militaristic society? Wonderful.

"Lastly, we have the Salarians, very fast, very smart and very short lived due to their hyperactive metabolism. They can survive on one hour of sleep per cycle and are often used in reconnaissance roles. They aren't likely to fair well in a direct fire fight but they are good at collecting information. It's generally accepted that they know more than they are letting on."

Right then.

"I do not like this Cortana."

And he didn't. He did not like the idea of working with this Shepard Woman, he did not like the idea of working with aliens, he did not like the thought that he was in place he didn't know or even a time as the case may be, he did not like the idea that there was no slipspace travel and he most definitely did not like the idea that the humans that inhabited this area of space were bound by the rules and regulations of an alien government.

Unfortunately, he didn't have a choice. Cortana needed time. Time they did not have on the Dawn. Shepard had a way out, that way out included him helping her. It was as simple as that.

"Cheer up big guy, who knows, maybe a different opportunity will arise later on. But for now, this is what we've got."

Maybe it would, but that didn't mean he had to be happy about this one.

"So, what do I call you?" Came Shepard's voice.

"Spartan" Simple, accurate, just the way he liked it.

"Don't you have a name?"

There was no way he was telling her that. His name was a deeply personal thing for him and there was no chance he was about to hand it out willy nilly.

"Spartan will suffice." Hopefully she wouldn't press any more.

She seemed to get the point.

"Suit yourself." She walked to the side, reached out and plucked her gun from the vacuum before reattaching it to her hip. It folded away.

Strange.

"Now, If you'd kindly go and fetch my crew from wherever you put them whilst I check on Garrus"

Her tone was not friendly, and he couldn't blame her. She walked towards the blue armoured alien he had taken down earlier, he had punched the side of the helmet and dented it severely, luckily the visor hadn't smashed nor the seal broken.

He nodded towards Shepard and launched himself up into the darkness, reaching out, he grabbed a cooling pipe and climbed onto the maintenance catwalk. The two humans were slumped next to each other, unconscious and a little bruised but otherwise unharmed.

He picked up the male and through him over his shoulder before picking up the woman and wrapping one arm around her middle. He jumped back down, in front of Shepard.

She looked towards him and her crew members, then nodded and spoke.

"Follow me towards the shuttle" Her words were terse. She picked up the alien, recognisable as a Turian now, and draped one of its arms across her shoulder before setting off down the hallway.

Chief followed behind.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Date: unknown, Location: unknown.<strong>

Linda blinked wearily, slowly opening her eyes.

Her armour appeared to be in emergency shut down, her visor was dark, her HUD was non-existent and it took extreme effort to move her limbs, the servos were offline.

Not good.

She activated the system reboot via her neural lace, it would take a minute or so. As her suit booted up she took in as much of her surroundings as she could.

She was laying against something, she wasn't flat but nor was she standing. Linda seemed to be propped up against something, she assumed it was a hill of some type as the view in front of her was dominated by rolling fields and hills. The area was bathed in night as the system readout scrolled down her visor.

Shields operational, off.

Armour integrity, 100%

Hydro-static gel layer, functioning.

Biofoam injectors, operational.

Pressure seal, intact.

Fusion reactor, Intact.

External sensors, operational.

Helmet radio, operational.

Systems fully operational, booting AI interface.

"Finally! Honestly, I thought you'd never wake up m'lady. Are you unharmed?" Darius' voice filtered into her helmet via her internal speakers.

"I'm fine" Her reply was short but she was sure the AI didn't mind.

"Wonderful, scanning the local area now"

She slowly stood, her limbs ached but it was a mild annoyance at worst. Looking around for a moment she saw her black bag laying haphazardly a few feet away, her sniper rifle was next to it, covered in dirt. That would need a good clean.

Linda swung her bag onto her back and picked up her rifle.

"We appear to be on a Garden world, slightly lower average temperature than earth, slightly lower gravitational pull. Somewhat thicker atmosphere. The local terrain is comprised of fields, pastures and hilly farmland. There seems to be a small encampment on the very edge of the suit sensors."

Looked like that was there first stop.

Darius placed a NAV marker on her HUD.

"I recommend scouting out that camp, I have no idea where we are or what world we're on, I don't even know what part of the galaxy we're in. Assume hostiles."

Linda nodded and set off in the direction of the marker.

\* \* \*

><p>AN: slightly shorter than the first chapter, sorry about that. I'm not exactly happy with how this turned out, I don't think I go the characterisation right. Unfortunately this is probably as good as it will get so, please, leave a review if you want.

End  
file.